

January 20, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, the Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Assistant Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Byron Dorgan  
Chairman  
Democratic Policy Committee  
419 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Majority Leader Reid, Assistant Majority Leader Durbin, and Senator Dorgan:

As you draft the Senate version of a jobs and state fiscal relief package, we write to urge you to include provisions to simultaneously create jobs in the construction industry and to provide communities with greater access to affordable housing by funding the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF). Doing so now is especially important as we seek to increase employment opportunities for jobless workers and as the housing needs of more and more Americans become ever more pressing with the rise in foreclosures.

The Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, which was signed into law on July 30, 2008, created the NHTF so that a permanent source of funding for affordable housing, not subject to the annual appropriations process, could be in place. However, a year and a half later, the NHTF has yet to be funded, even though for every 100 extremely low income renter households, there are only 37 affordable rental homes. This means that more than 60% of these households are struggling to find affordable housing in these tough times.

In its Jobs for Main Street Act, the House of Representatives has included \$1 billion for the NHTF and \$65 million for project based vouchers to support units built by the NHTF. We request that this same funding be included in the Senate version of a jobs and state fiscal relief package. By doing so, it is estimated that about 10,000 rental homes for the lowest income families could be built, preserved, or rehabilitated. More than 15,000 immediate new jobs in the building trades could be created. And nearly 4,000 ongoing jobs could be created to operate these homes.

By finally funding the NHTF in a fiscally responsible manner, we would not only create jobs in the construction industry, but we would also address the growing need for affordable housing.

We know that you share our support for these essential goals, and we look forward to working with you to develop an effective jobs and state fiscal relief package.

Sincerely,